



# *discover safety*

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*Uncover God's final warning for earth's epic showdown  
and how we can be prepared*

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**Published** by HopeChannel

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**Layout** by Elena Janakijovska

**Typeset** in Univers

**Printed** in Australia by Signs Publishing Company®

Unless otherwise stated all Bible texts are from the **New King James Version**

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Years ago in a small village in India, a girl was born who had a very rare condition in which a single head has two faces. Her name was Lali. With the exception of two ears, every other feature was doubled - two noses, two eyes, and two mouths.

Many in India saw the infant as a god. They brought gifts to her, worshipped her, and even asked the government to build a temple in the village in honour of the child, who they saw as the reincarnation of Ganesh, a Hindu god who is half person, half elephant.

It has been said that humans need to worship something. It doesn't matter what or who, just something, anything - themselves, money, power, sex, a deformed infant, whatever.

This reality is also seen in the book of Revelation, where the great controversy between Christ and Satan will climax at the end of the ages over - of all things - the question of worship.

Who do we worship - the true God, or any of the myriad of false ones? All false worship will be manifested in what the Bible calls the mark of the beast - the symbol of all false worship, all false gods, all error - in contrast to those who worship the true God, the Creator, the one *who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water*. Revelation 14:7

## THE ROMAN POWER

As we have seen, Revelation 13 starts out depicting a hybrid beast power. That first beast is based on the prophecy of Daniel 7 that symbolises papal Rome. What else could it be? Daniel 7 showed four empires throughout history - Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Rome

was the final power to exist before a judgment in heaven that leads to the establishment of God's eternal kingdom. See Daniel 7:23-27. Pagan Rome vanished long ago. Papal Rome - the little horn which is the latter phase of the fourth beast - still exists today. After all, what power other than Rome arose after ancient Greece, and is still in existence? As we saw in the last booklet, too, many characteristics of that little horn power are repeated in the description of this apocalyptic power in Revelation 13.

It is, unquestionably, the Papacy.

## THE AMERICAN POWER

As previously noted, the Papacy doesn't have many soldiers, but the United States does, and this powerful nation was the second power to appear in Revelation 13 - the only power that fits the prophecy so well. And though a model for religious liberty, America will change. It will, as the prophecy says, *speak as a dragon* (Revelation 13:11), forcing the world to worship the first beast. Though we don't know how this will happen, something will cause the United States to become - instead of the beacon of religious freedom and liberty it has always been - the major cause of religious persecution in the world!

Talking about the United States, Revelation says:



***He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy***

***or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.***

*Revelation 13:15-17*

Notice, too, what is the crucial issue here? It is worship. In the final showdown of earth's history, as the great controversy between Christ and Satan climaxes in the end of the age, the question over who we worship will be seen more clearly than ever before. From the beginning of time humans have worshipped either the true God or any one of a myriad of false ones, and in this final showdown the lines will be very clearly drawn. We will worship and serve the Lord, or we will worship and serve the beast power. There is no middle ground.

Or, as Jesus said so clearly: *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.* Luke 11:23

What these texts show us is that in the last days, as the controversy climaxes, political and religious powers will unite to force the conscience of people to worship the beast and his image.

Thus, the question here for us is: What is this *image*, and the *mark*, or *the name of the beast* that the book of Revelation so powerfully warns us about?

Or, even more importantly - what can we do to avoid getting this mark?

## THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST



***And he*** (the second beast) ***deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the***

***sight of the (first) beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.***

*Revelation 13:14*

An image is a reflection of or a likeness to - not a sameness - just as we humans are made in the image of God. See Genesis 1:26-27.

Notice God identifies the characteristics of the first beast before He says an image is made to it. Notice Revelation 13:6-7:



***Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.***

The two notable characteristics of the first beast listed here are blasphemy and persecution. We can confidently conclude then that this image is a reintroduction of blasphemous and persecuting activity - but now on a global scale.

## THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

God has a strong warning about worshipping *the beast and his image*, and receiving *his mark on your forehead or on your hand*. Revelation 14:9

The warning comes in three stages, and is referred to as the *Three Angels' Messages*. And it's here we can learn more about what this mark really means.

In fact, all this talk about persecution leads right into the Three Angels' Messages, because in them we find not only the key to what the mark of beast is, but also how to avoid it.

The first angel says:



***Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth -to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people -saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.***

*Revelation 14:6-7*

First and foremost, it begins with the *everlasting gospel* - that is, the foundation of all these truths rests on the great news of Jesus Christ and His atoning death for sinners. It then says that the *hour of His judgment has come* - the judgment that we looked at in Booklet 17, the great judgment that precedes the Second Coming of Jesus.

Notice what else is mentioned, because this is crucial. As we have seen, the issue in the last days centres around worship. Those who worship the beast and its image will face the punishment of God Himself. In contrast, the first angel tells people to *worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water*. Revelation 14:7

There is only one God - the Creator, the one *who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water* - and as such, He alone is worthy of our worship. Also, in this call to worship the Creator, the language is taken almost verbatim from the fourth commandment - the seventh-day Sabbath.



*For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Exodus 20:11*

This link is very clear and becomes very important, as we will quickly see.

The second angel says:

*And another angel followed, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city. Revelation 14:8* The empire of Babylon, of course, disappeared thousands of years ago. Instead, the name has become a symbol of all the world's false religions and political powers - the religions and powers that will ultimately accept the mark of the beast. This global coalition of false religion is headed by the second beast, as shown in Revelation 13. He *causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, and he deceives those who dwell on the earth, and he tells those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the first beast, and he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.*

Next is the third angel.

His message begins with the fearsome warning that we have been studying. *If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. Revelation 14:9-10*

That warning, however, is immediately contrasted with God's people, who are depicted as follows:



***Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.***

*Revelation 14:12*

## THE MARK OF THE BEAST

Here are two crucial points. Firstly, God is calling people to worship him as the Creator, and that call uses language taken from the fourth commandment - the seventh-day Sabbath. Next, in contrast to those who worship the beast and its image, are those who are identified by their worship of God as Creator - that is those who *keep the commandments of God*.

So, two characteristics identify God's faithful people in the climax of the great controversy:

1. They worship God as He *who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water* (Revelation 14:7) - a direct reference to one of *the commandments of God*. Revelation 14:12

2. They keep *the commandments of God*, which includes the seventh-day Sabbath. *For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day*. Exodus 20:11

Thus, the first angel's message, with its reference to the Sabbath commandment, ties in directly with the third angel's message, with its reference to keeping the commandments of God. This includes, especially given the context, the commandment of God that points to Him as the Maker of *heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water* (Revelation 14:7) - the One who people are to worship as opposed to the beast.

Remember, too, what we studied in Booklet 13: *It was the fourth beast power, the little horn, which is the Papacy - the beast of Revelation 13:1-10 - which had usurped that commandment and replaced it with Sunday, a day never attested to in the Bible!* Daniel 7 warned that this power would *think to change times and law* (Daniel 7:25), exactly what happened with the one law about time - the seventh-day Sabbath - which the Papacy tried to replace with Sunday.

Are we saying, then, that the issue around the mark of the beast will be its opposition to the commandment to *worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water* (Revelation 14:7) - the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, as opposed to Sunday, the day that was instituted by the beast power itself?

Exactly.

Let's look at the logic. The issue in the last days will climax around worship - either we worship the Creator, or we worship the beast. Unfortunately, as we have seen, the two beast powers will work together to compel everyone to receive the mark of the beast.

Those who worship the Creator, in contrast to those who worship the beast, *keep the commandments of God*, and the only commandment that points to God as the Creator - the One *who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water* (Revelation 14:7) - is the commandment that the beast power, as predicted, sought to change!

And this change has been accepted by most of world!

## FOREHEAD AND HANDS

But doesn't the warning talk about anyone who *receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand*? Revelation 14:9 How could that be Sunday worship, as opposed to keeping the biblical Sabbath?

Have you ever seen pictures of religious Jews wrapping Tefillin? That is, they wrap a small box on their hand, and the other on their forehead, while they pray. This comes from the Old Testament, when the Hebrews - after being given God's commandments - were told: *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* Deuteronomy 6:8 Also: *Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* Deuteronomy 11:18

The *frontlets between your eyes* - translated *foreheads* in the NIV - symbolise what we have in our minds, while our *hand* symbolises what we do - our actions. Though popular interpretations often depict these as literal marks that will be on our foreheads or hands, the book of Revelation, again using language and concepts from the Old Testament, shows where the loyalties (forehead) of those who receive the mark lie - a loyalty revealed in their works (hands).

Are we saying, then, that those who go to church on Sunday have the mark of the beast now?

Of course not.

Instead, the Bible teaches that a time will come when the choice that all people have always faced - the choice between eternal life and eternal

death - will come to a head, will come to a final world-wide climax, and only then will the mark of the beast come into effect.

What we are going to see in this final day is what we have seen all through history - religious entities using the power of the state to enforce their doctrine. Most of us, living in what have been called liberal democracies, know only religious freedom. But we are the exception, not the rule. The rule for many people today - and for much of the world historically - has been the force of law to compel the conscience in religious matters. Unfortunately, as these verses reveal, this is going to happen again on a global scale, but this time with the seventh-day Sabbath front and centre.

## THE FOUNDATION

This crucial truth comes into clearer focus when we review what the seventh day means.

Look at this quote from Booklet 13: *As we already saw, the seventh day is the biblical symbol, the biblical sign, the foundational sign of God as God Himself! In the creation story, imbedded deep in it, is this sign of that work of creation, the seventh day. You can't get any farther back, without going to God Himself.*

Think about it. Everything that Christians believe is, really, rooted in one reality - God is our Creator. Nothing in Christianity makes sense apart from that foundational truth. The cross, salvation, the Second Coming, every teaching, every doctrine - everything is based on God as the one who made the world.

Creation, then, forms the ground - the foundation - of all biblical teachings, and the seventh-day Sabbath - embedded in the Genesis creation itself (Genesis 2:1-3) - stands as the eternal and immutable sign of that creation. In other words, the Sabbath is the most basic reminder of the most basic teaching. The only thing behind it, and more fundamental - is God Himself.

Thus, to usurp the seventh-day Sabbath is to usurp the Lord's authority at the most prime level possible - that of Him as Creator. It is to get behind everything and uproot it at its core. Indeed, it is to seek to take the place of God Himself (2 Thessalonians 2:4), which we have seen is what this power seeks to do. It claims worship that belongs only to the Creator.

God's people are called to worship Him. They are also depicted as *keeping the commandments of God*. Revelation 14:12 And, of all those commandments, the seventh-day Sabbath alone stands behind everything else, because it alone points to God as Creator - the only One we are called to worship - in contrast to the same power that sought to usurp not only the commandment but the role of God Himself.

No wonder millions around the world believe the seventh-day Sabbath will be the outward symbol of the final divide between those who worship the Lord and those who worship the beast.

Considering how basic and fundamental the Sabbath is to everything else, it's hard to see how the final issue could be around anything else.

How this will all unfold, the Bible hasn't told us. It has just told us that it will, and has given us a powerful warning about what we should have, figuratively speaking, impressed deep within our foreheads and our hands - and that is *the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*.

Revelation 14:12

The final warnings increase in intensity and reach a climax with God's final appeal:



***After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.***

*Revelation 18:1-4*

In these verses the prophecy is fulfilled. Note the tense - *have - have - have*.

## SEALED BY GOD

While the mark is being received by a disobedient world, God is doing something special too for His faithful ones.



***After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with***

***a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.***

*Revelation 7:1-3*

While people in rebellion are receiving the mark of the beast, God is sealing his people. Where do they receive the seal? *On their foreheads.* The sealing is the work of the Holy Spirit - leading people to heed God's warning and to obey the truth. See Ephesians 1:13.

The end has not yet come. It is near, but not here - not yet. God's message is today being beamed around this planet in rebellion. *Come out of her my people* (Revelation 18:4) is God's final appeal. God has His faithful ones in all religions. As the issue is made clear, and the message received, these faithful ones come out of her and take their stand with those *who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.* Revelation 14:12

This is decision time.



***And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.***

*Revelation 22:17*

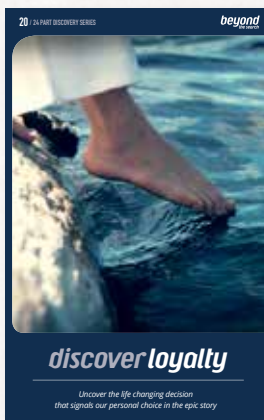








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